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FROM CHINA
TO BAGHDAD

BY
MARCUS MACKENZIE
(T.) Captain R.A.M.C.

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1919

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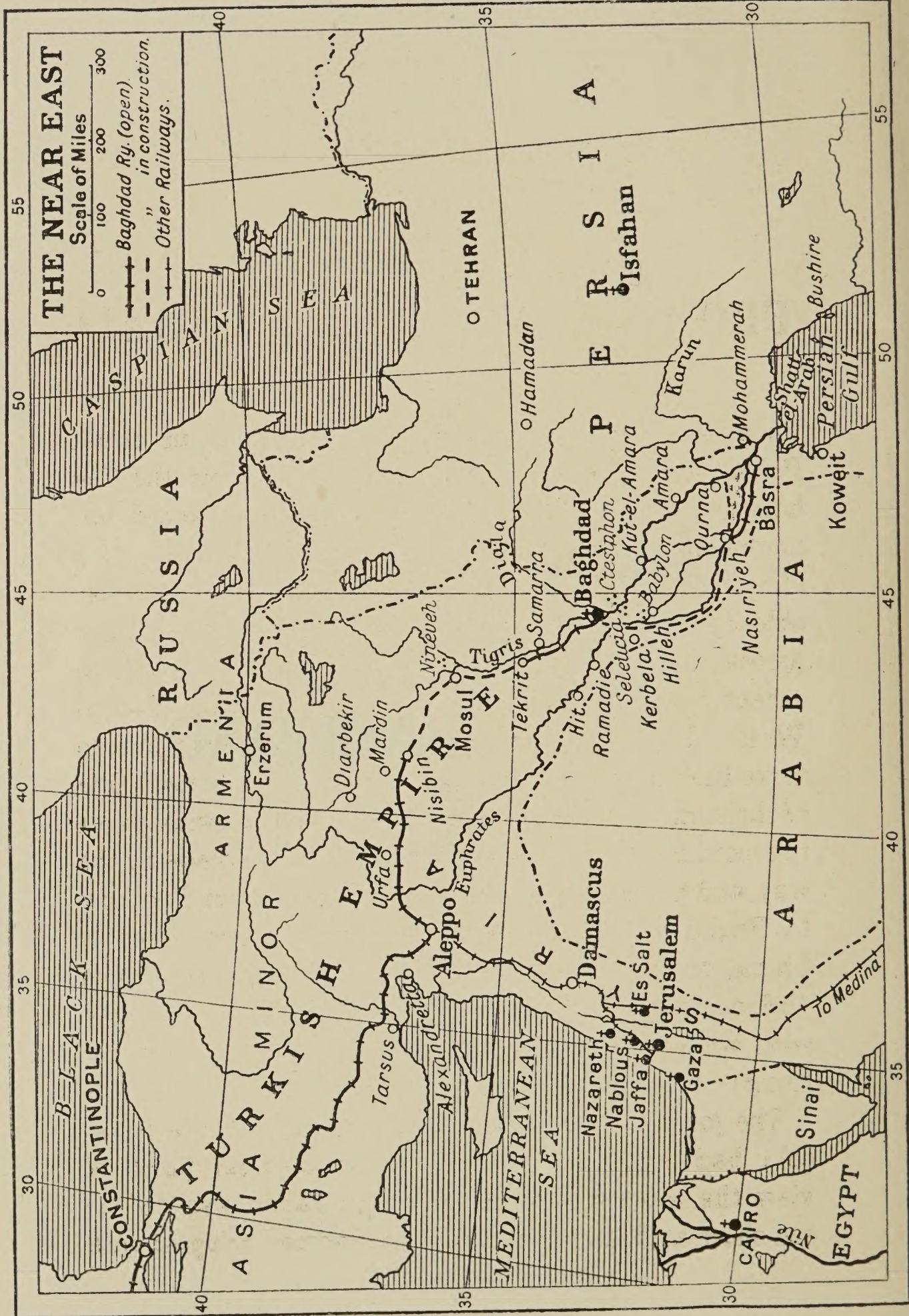
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FROM topsy-turvy China flocked thousands of Great Britain's sons to help in the war. They left the Tea hongs, Customs, Banks and Colleges, and joined up, merchants and missionaries, all eager to serve their Empire in its struggle to deliver Europe from the intolerable tyranny of German aggression. They travelled across the vast snow-clad plains of Siberia, trackless except for a double ribbon of steel running from East to West. They traversed oceans and great desert plains to serve their country in the fight for law and liberty. One of their number has made an effort in the following pages to record his observations, culled from notes made by the way, and his reading whilst on the journey from Foochow to Baghdad. After having worked for many years in China, one automatically is led to compare the people and customs with those of other Eastern races met with whilst on service. Hence the many allusions to things Chinese in the following narrative.

The journey from Shanghai to Vladivostok via Nagasaki had little of note. From a medical point of view the most interesting scene in Japan was on the sea-shore at Beppu, when men and women crippled with

rheumatism and various forms of joint affections were laid down flat in the sand and buried all but their faces, whilst the sea rippled up to their feet. It was the heat cure in its most natural form. Above was the blazing sun, whilst beneath were hot springs sending up sulphurous vapours through the sand. Beppu abounds in these springs, which have a temperature of 130° F. Needless to relate, the inhabitants of the Southern Island are exceedingly clean, as their spare moments seem to be spent in the baths.

The harbour of Vladivostok is one of Nature's best. It is deep and quite shut off from the Pacific. Hills, well fortified, overlook the entire channel way from the ocean. It could with ease afford anchorage for the entire British Navy. Once on Russian soil, we almost immediately started on the long train journey to Bergen. From Vladivostok to Petrograd is 9,877 versts. We travelled *train-de-luxe*, four men in each spacious compartment. Dreary thick snow lay over the whole country, but in that train warmth, light, and food were all that could be desired. The Russians make congenial companions and are most hospitable. You drink fairly weak tea, containing a lump of sugar and a little slice of lemon, from a tumbler. Many people took one good meal a day in the dining-car, and for the other meals ate picnic fashion in the carriages, as cooked fowls, huge loaves of new bread, milk and butter, were to be had at the stations *ad lib.* The country is flat; you could have a tennis-court anywhere. The route lies a good way from the main towns, and you pass by Irkutsk, Tomsk, Omsk

without more than a distant glimpse of them. For the sake of exercise passengers ran up and down the platforms at the few stations, clad in the heaviest coats and wearing fur caps. There is a samovar at every station, and you can have a glass of tea for a trifle. The speed of the train rarely exceeded twenty-five miles an hour by day and night. Acres of stacked wood lay ready for use at the stations, for wood was the chief fuel for the engines. We skirted the southern shore of Lake Baikal and crossed the Ural Mountains through forests of ash and pine-trees. Large batches of Austrian prisoners were employed repairing the track. They were chiefly Slavs who had been captured early in the war. They struck us as being most comfortably clad and contented with their lot. It was commonly reported that many Austrians were marrying Russian widows!

I must mention, with deep gratitude, the many kindnesses of a fellow-traveller, Mr. Waldomar Stronkoff, a fine tall Russian who has figured in commercial life at Moscow for fifty years. Who could be a better guide? None more kind than he! With such a pilot Moscow was revealed to me during three days' sojourn. Jumping into a sleigh, we dashed through the snow, driven by three horses, to the Bazaar Slave Hotel, where a comfortable room could be had for the sum of four shillings a day. The city, built for the most part of white stone, glistened in the sunshine. Snow bespeckled the numerous spires, minarets, and cupolas. These are dotted over the city, which is built on seven hills. The River Moscow was frozen, a river which is said to have

drained torrents of human blood. At meals there were rusks of white bread, also the well-known black rye bread eaten by peasants as their staple food. Rye bread certainly is not attractive; it costs about a halfpenny a pound. Vodka and kavass are the usual stimulants of the people; but every meal is furnished with, and would be incomplete without, tea. The samovar (*lit.*, self-boiler) or tea-urn is in every Russian house. It is heated by charcoal, burning in a centrally placed pipe, thus supplying the boiling water for infusing tea, which is drunk from a tumbler containing a lump of sugar and a thin slice of lemon. Mr. Stronkoff turned on the wheel of sight-seeing at a great pace. All the principal places of note were visited. The Kremlin is Moscow's best show. On entering by the Holy Gate hats must be removed, as a miraculous ikon of the Saviour is suspended over the archway. The towers are of Italian build and contain relics priceless in value. British wealth consists in ready money, but Russia keeps hers tied up in the paraphernalia of her holy places, and no doubt it could be brought into use in times of national distress. There is in the Cathedral of the Assumption an ikon said to be the work of St. Luke (artist as well as doctor). My guide mentioned that it worked miracles, and added that "one man was very dead, but it touched him and he became healthy." He evinced great faith in the efficacy of relics. I saw him repeatedly kiss what was reputed to be a finger-nail and a piece of coat belonging to our Lord. Also he kissed the knees and toes of many images, though many a beggar preceded him in the act.

Truly a septic form of devotion. The Cathedral of Basil the Blessed has seven churches built closely around a principal or eighth church. It was built by an Italian about 1554. Ivan the Terrible blinded the architect's eyes, so that he might never build another like it. Napoleon gave the order "Blow up that mosque." Happily the fuse failed to ignite. Near by is the Red Gate where Ivan the Terrible impaled and quartered many of his subjects, yet he was popular with the peasants. What a wealth of marble and metals in the Church of the Archangels, in which the Tsars are buried! also in the Church of the Annunciation, with its nineteen cupolas, where the Tsars are married. One of the most beautiful and costly edifices in Europe is the Cathedral of the Saviour, built in memory of the deliverance from the French in 1812. It is impossible to describe the paintings: mosaics and wealth of red, black, grey, and white marble in the main structure of the building. My guide brought me to the famous monastery of Saint Alexis, which houses 400 nuns. The nuns remarked that I was the first Englishman to be admitted. They soon turned on the samovar, and with eggs, honey, preserves, we were well refreshed. Some nuns occupy their time painting sacred pictures. One gave me a chaste hand-painted porcelain egg, whilst another nun kindly mended a tear in my frieze coat. Mr. Stronkoff retired to the cemetery, where he worshipped at his mother's grave. The graves are costly, and are lighted nightly by the nuns. The old Gregorian chants are used in the cathedral, where the services are conducted by a priest, whose rich bass voice

is one of the chief attractions. The choirs are highly trained and the music is rich and harmonious. The keen dry air and extremes of temperature have much to do with the quality of the voice. Before leaving Moscow I was treated to a sumptuous dinner at the station, in which caviare was the special item. In Russia they obey the injunction to greet one another with a kiss, and my host, the kindest of men, did not let me escape.

A few days spent in the Astoria Hotel, Petrograd, gave an opportunity of seeing this famous capital, where at that time the economic conditions were good, and signs of distress were lacking. The longest journey comes to an end; but, before arriving on British soil, we experienced a rude reminder that all travelling was not smooth in war-time. It was at early morning in the North Sea that our ship's propeller struck a hostile submarine. At breakfast there was a thrilling bump, and the ship stopped. Everyone scurried up on deck, passengers, stewards, cooks, in search of lifebelts, of which there was a great plenty. It was discovered that the impact had broken the propeller shaft some eight feet up. We were compelled to anchor in sixty fathoms of water and wait for a relief.

Leakage was kept under control, and wireless messages sounded forth for help, with the result that a ship came to our aid after the lapse of twenty-four hours. As the sea kept calm, we possessed our souls in patience. The travellers were transferred in small boats to a relief ship, and eventually had a calm, sunny voyage to England.

OUTWARD BOUND.—At the close of a year's spell of service in Egypt, I sailed away from England for Mesopotamia in 1917, with a large convoy of troopships and their escort. Ours was but a small boat carrying some 1,600 men. A Major in the gunners was the life of the party, organizing entertainments and sports. There were concerts every other night, for there was much musical talent on board. Two genial and capable doctors, Lieutenants Bryers and Mitchell, R.A.M.C., from Belfast, helped me in caring for the sick. As we had an outbreak of measles, several pneumonias, and almost ceaseless inoculations, ship inspections and life-boat drill, time did not hang heavy on our hands. At leisure moments the Senior Medical Officer lectured on "The Preservation of Health in the East," "Benefits of Inoculation," "Venereal Disease." A Commanding Officer gave a very popular lecture on "General Wauchope of the Black Watch," whose ten axioms we were exhorted to remember and carry out. They were easy to remember when given in the form of an acrostic:

Brotherhood is based on discipline.
Lead your men, they will follow.
Always teach by personal example.
Curb your tongue and temper.
Know your men well, that is the secret of command.
Win devotion by deserving it.
Act promptly.
Talk straight.
Consider your men and horses before your own
comfort.
Hate injustice and loathe lying.

But in spite of this busy and varied life on board ship, the thought must often have been present in the minds of men, even if not finding expression in words, how many of us will ever see the homeland again? Our ship, H.M.T. *Suevic*, had an interesting past, for on one homeward voyage from Australia she ran on the rocks off the Lizard, stranding there. The forepart of the ship was seriously injured. To salvage her the nose was blown off by powerful explosives, and thus severed from the main and after portion. The ship was rendered as watertight as possible and towed stern first to Belfast, where a new nose was grafted on, making the vessel fit for service. At Sierra Leone a few seriously sick were transferred to hospital ashore. The town has numerous places of worship, to which coloured people were flocking—for we landed on a Sunday. The men wore black silk hats, high collars, and swallow-tailed coats. I visited a prosperous Church Mission College, which occupies the site of an old slave market. Missionary enterprise has had a marvellously successful career amongst the native population. There was a marked absence of ceremony, as we crossed the line. As day after day passed by interest in the life on the ocean increased. Schools of porpoises at play or dashing close in front of the bows of the boat, as if saying, “You can’t catch me,” the flying-fish startled from its watery bed, the floating nautilus looking like a miniature perambulator, or an occasional whale sporting in the sunshine—these objects ever attracted attention by day. Nor were the nights devoid of interest, for the wonders of Nature

are inexhaustible. Phosphorescent infusoria illuminating the ship's track, and the constellation of the Southern Cross, were novelties to the many. Only a favoured few were permitted to go ashore at the Cape, so it may well be imagined that, after weeks of travel, covering 6,790 miles, the men rejoiced when the camouflaged ships were brought to anchor in the spacious harbour at Durban.

At Durban all troops disembarked and remained under canvas for four weeks. It was quite a picnic time, as the people of Durban vied with one another in showing kindness. Trams were free, likewise concerts, motor-drives, surf-bathing—these and tennis parties were some of the attractions of this hospitable port. Even when our men, to the number of 5,000, embarked on H.M.T. *Caronia* favours still followed them. The port side of the huge transport was crowded with men and each port-hole framed a head. Fruit, sweets, tobacco, and even books, were thrown up to them by the people on the shore. The men knotted their puttees together and tied them to helmets and caps; and if the lines were insufficiently long pugarees were added and helmets were thrown on the quay, to be immediately filled with good things by the fair citizens of Durban. This form of angling went on day after day for wellnigh one week. There seemed to be no end to the parting gifts and good-byes, until the ship steamed out to sea, and even then the younger people ran along the breakwater waving a final farewell. Many a one was heard to express the wish to return some day and settle in picturesque Durban. There was a whaling station close to the

harbour lighthouse. Sailors were engaged in sharpening harpoons, as in a short time the boats would set out along the coast, where whales are plentiful in the month of June. The harpoon is fired by a gun, and the great mammal, after being inflated with air, is towed captive to the station for the sake of its oil and whalebone. The pleasure of this long voyage was somewhat marred by the outbreak of fire in the ship's coal-bunkers and by the presence of bugs throughout the decks. The latter trouble merely occasioned loss of sleep through irritation and the discomforting after effects, wheals and boils due to the bites. All infected clothing and woodwork were effectively sterilized, and thus the pests and the larvæ were exterminated. But it was a very arduous process. The smouldering fires in three coal-bunkers was a more serious difficulty, and not so easily dealt with. The troops readily volunteered help in the dangerous work of stoking. Frequent explosions of gas rendered risk to life and limbs very real. Twenty-two men received serious burns, so that the ship's hospital accommodation and surgical dressings were used to their full. The more seriously injured were eventually landed at Dar-es-Salem. At length it became necessary to anchor the ship in shallow water in Tongui Bay whilst the bunkers were being flooded. All this under a tropical sun.

Everyone was pleased to arrive at Bombay after so long a voyage, and thankful for preservation from the numerous mines, which proved fatal to many a troopship travelling on the same line of route. As Medical Officer I was deputed to conduct troops to Belgaum (a

place ever to be remembered for its delicious mangoes), and also from Bombay to Delhi, so had an opportunity of visiting the Taj Mahal in Agra, as well as the Delhi Fort and Lucknow Gate. Delhi possesses a noble English church (St. James's), which was erected by Colonel Skinner, who when lying wounded resolved to build a church if his life was preserved. No doubt many a soldier has made some such vow during the present war, determining to give life and means to the service of God, and will perform his vow to the Most High. In due time I found a passage in the beautiful hospital ship *Loyalty* bound for Basra. Indian chiefs and citizens have placed the two hospital ships *Loyalty* and *Madras* at the service of the Government, and they defray the cost of upkeep. These snow-white vessels carry red lights and have a broad deep red band painted around the bulwarks. The *Madras* accommodates 500 patients, and possesses the advantage of being able to cross the bar and proceed right up to Basra. On the homeward voyage she came to our rescue in a time of peril. The *Loyalty* was the gift of His Highness the Maharajah of Gwalior and other princes. Her original name was *Empress of India*. There are 259 beds for the sick and wounded. The comfortable music saloon contains photos of the subscribing chiefs who bear the cost of upkeep, said to amount to £300 a day. The passage out from Bombay lay through troubled waters, as we encountered the monsoon seas coming up from the south. The O.C., Major Watson, was well pleased with the Chinese carpenters, of whom there were half a dozen on board.

“They do their work well and give no trouble,” he said. Passing through the Straits of Oman and Ormuz, we steamed along the southern shores of Persia, where barren cliffs could be seen rising sheer and steep out of the water. Unable to cross the bar, we anchored at Fao, and waited five days for the arrival of the hospital ship *Vita*, which came down from Basra with patients to be transferred to the *Loyalty*. Whilst we were at anchor some fished for sharks, others, with less ambition, sought for smaller fry. However, the cat-fish alone proved plentiful. It is eaten by natives only. Annulated poisonous sea-snakes and a few sharks were seen circling round the ship.

Transfer to the *Vita* was eventually effected, and she set out on the ninety miles' journey up the Shatt-el-Arab to Basra. This stretch of water is formed by the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, joined by the Karun from Persia. The double-decked hospital ship passed through much hot air, for the weather was oppressive. Window and door spaces were screened with coarse matting, which was frequently sprayed with water, so as to keep the air in the saloon at a comfortable temperature. Several millions of stately palm-trees laden with fruit lined both banks of the river, but not for any great depth for it was possible to see beyond into the trackless desert. The funnels and masts of three steamers, sunk by the Turks with a view to block the fairway, were passed. It is said that the agent employed to prevent the British Expeditionary Force making its way upstream showed partiality to the Allies by allowing the third steamer to

sink with bow upstream, thus leaving a navigable passage between it and the bank, which is used to this day. For this act of treachery he lost his life. We passed Abadan on the left bank, where the pipe-line ends which fills the huge reservoirs of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. Here 10,000 men are employed in refining the oil, which has travelled through 150 miles of piping.

THE RIVER.—By those who merely have to turn on the tap in order to supply themselves with all the water they need, year in and year out, the vital importance of a river in a tropical country is apt to be overlooked. The dweller in the rainless lands of the East is constantly concerned with the question of water-supply, and uses proverbs such as “From water we have made all things live,” “Everything shall live whither the river cometh,” “The gift of Allah.” Mesopotamia, the land of the two rivers, is a notable instance—a land of intense sunshine, where moisture in all its forms is greatly appreciated. Through the midst of this potentially fruitful country flow the Tigris and Euphrates, the life-blood of the land, without which all would be a lifeless desert. They are the promise of all that life means. Much of the world’s war is being carried on in Bible lands, and in such places there are spells of terrible thirst. Every man has felt it. Even though

“ His are the thousand sparkling rills
That from a thousand fountains burst
And fill with music all the hills,
Yet He saith, ‘I thirst.’ ”

If the mighty Yellow River is termed "The sorrow of China," these twin rivers may well be called the "joy of Mesopotamia," where all life and time began. A word as to the beginnings of these rivers. As the snow melts on the southern slopes of the Taurus Mountains in Armenia, streams form and flow, in increasing volume, in somewhat parallel courses, until they unite above Basra to form the Shatt-el-Arab. Separated by some 200 miles at their source, they run in a south-east direction, carrying snows, rains and alluvial deposits for the thousand miles of their course. Eventually both the clear-watered Euphrates and the turbid Tigris, joined by the Karun from Persia, unite and flow into the Persian Gulf. The course of the Tigris, the swifter stream, is notched in many places, showing the remains of ancient canals for irrigating the land. The soil was wont to produce three crops annually. These canals were part of a scheme of defence against hostile tribes, as well as for trading purposes. The Tigris is a difficult river to navigate, by reason of its rapid current, serpentine windings, and the constantly changing depths of the stream.

At times a boat drawing seven feet of water will glide right up to Baghdad, whereas in the dry season our launch, drawing but four feet, found difficulty in proceeding so far. Turks and Chinese never dredge their rivers, trusting to floods to clear away the silt. In the meantime all manner of means are employed to get round or through the obstructing masses of sand and deposit. They use special craft to keep up communica-

tions and trade at all seasons of the year. These are known as maheilahs, bellums, and guffahs. There is, as a last resource, the kalak, which is practically a raft made of bamboos and poles hitched together and resting upon inflated sheep-skins. Drawing but a few inches of water, the kalak is used in the shallowest parts of the river. For the return journey the skins are deflated, and all sent back by camel-pack for future service. It is said that such simple craft were in use some thirty centuries ago for the conveyance of sculptures and stones to the palaces of Nineveh.

Guffahs are employed in deeper waters. They remind one of the circular coracles in use on the west coast of Ireland. In shape like a bird's nest, they are made of pomegranate branches, strongly intertwined and laced together with ropes. The whole is finally smeared inside and outside with black bitumen.

I have seen seven men with four donkeys in a guffah crossing the river. They are eight to ten feet across and about four feet deep. It requires some skill to paddle them, and there was much amusement at the guffah race during the aquatic sports held at Baghdad, when our soldiers used the paddle, for they would go round and round or too much to one side.

None of these boats are suitable for transporting wounded or sick men down the river. There are dangerous currents, which have cost many officers and men their lives. At a place called the "Narrows" and the "Devil's Elbow" the river was scarcely four feet deep. Our launch, by powerful rotations of the paddle,

managed to wriggle its way through the obstructing mud, after making long and strenuous efforts. Sometimes an anchor was dropped in the stream far ahead of the bow or on the bank, and by hauling on the rope with a windlass we got through. In some places an officer of the Royal Engineers was using an old Dutch method, often employed recently on Chinese rivers. Bamboo stakes are firmly inserted close together, extending towards the centre of the river from both banks; these are intertwined with matting, so that the water is forced to run in the central channel, through which the boats find a ready passage. In most places the banks are merely a few feet high. "Oh, the river is a pure delight in a desert land!" and by it there is life abundant. Mosul, Baghdad, Ctesiphon, Kut, Amara, Basra, these are the towns on the Tigris.

BASRA.—The *Vita* drew up alongside the jetty directly opposite No. 3 British General Hospital. The building had been the town palace of a sheikh. There was a scene of the liveliest activity on shore and river. Tongues of Babel might be heard at the Basra jetty. Thousands of Chinese Labour Corps men went about their work in their usual cheery manner, Indian coolies were unloading steamers, whilst up the various creeks (Asher, etc.) which run back at right angles to the river little boats were being poled along. Many people were bathing, others at laundry work, and the drainage of the town flowed into the same creek! The whole place is commonly called "Basra," though the actual town of

that name is situated a few miles inland. As is characteristic of most towns in the Far East, there exists an extraordinary number of smells. At Basra and other places up the river thousands of acres of land are being cultivated, under the able supervision of farmers from India, who endeavour to raise supplies of vegetables and mealies for the army. Fresh fruits, vegetables and meat are now easily obtainable in Mesopotamia, even by troops at advanced stations. After landing we were driven to the well-known camp at Makinah, where we lived in poorly roofed huts like African kraals. They were made of bamboo matting threaded together, and the whole was supported on poles. A thick grove of date-palms effectively kept away any breeze which might luckily have come our way.

For midges, flies, mosquitoes, and sandflies it was an ideal site. In China I had felt the tiny jet-black sandfly, but this local variety differed in being larger and khaki in colour. Ordinary mosquito-netting could not keep them out; only muslin curtains availed, and these proved very warm. Sleep seemed impossible the first night, so I arose at 1 a.m. and wandered about outside the hut, and was rewarded for rising thus early by seeing the moon in full eclipse. There was a weird sense of gloom over the place. There were the tables, laid out beneath the palms, at which a merry party had dined under a glorious full moon, aided by the light of lamps suspended from poles. There old soldiers chatted interestingly about the fights at Kut and Baghdad, and the fresh arrivals talked of Blighty and the long voyage

out. One night a jackal passed through the hut, and piteous howls arose from roving bands of these animals from time to time. I met a soldier on his way to India for Pasteur treatment, who had been bitten on the nose by one of these prowlers. Sandflies succeeded in infecting many of our men. One afternoon, when the temperature of the hut was 123° , and my personal temperature 103° , a kindly colleague suggested that I should go to the hospital. Rightly he surmised the onset of an attack of sandfly fever. The headache, thirst, and intense aching of joints are most troublesome symptoms. You feel absolutely played out, and can do nothing but drink cool lemonade and soda-water supplied night and day by devoted nurses. The strongest men feel completely helpless, and would no doubt shout "Kamerad" if attacked by a Turk! Unfortunately one illness does not render a man immune, and not a few get three attacks. Hundreds of officers were down with it. After spending three days in this well-equipped hospital, a party of us were sent five miles down stream to convalesce at Beita-Nameh. Three days spent in this convalescent home for officers made me quite fit for work. Here also modern science had turned the sheikh's abode and harem into a comfortable hospital, with electric light, fans, etc. It is a large, well-decorated, rambling house with flat roof, surrounded by fruit gardens. It proved a great boon to officers, of whom there were one hundred present recovering from the effects of the fever. The official register for heat on one of these days was 121.6° F. in the shade. Even when fans worked they merely wafted

hot air as from an oven. There were seventeen cases of heat-stroke among the troops that day. What greatly helps every man now is that there is a plentiful supply of soda-water, which can be had at the cost of four bottles for three-halfpence. The Y.M.C.A. canteen alone got through 112 dozen bottles of aerated waters, consumed on the premises in one day. In the British Red Cross Stores at Basra were to be seen comforts and supplies in great abundance.

When the medical arrangements in Mesopotamia caused anxiety at home large consignments of supplies and of all the most recent splints were rushed out from there. In this campaign the lines of communication were very long. Transport for wounded lacked the efficient light-railway. Bullock-carts were used on the desert until the arrival of motor ambulances. After the capture of Baghdad the more bulky appliances were despatched by steamer to the advanced hospitals. The voyage on a hospital barge from river head to the Base at Basra was long and very uncomfortable at the time, especially for men with fractured limbs. In addition to the wounded the medical officers had to treat all sorts of diseases. There were many more sick than wounded. An average "load" was 400 patients to each M.O. The endless variety of splints was confusing to these medical officers, who were almost all general practitioners, the most useful of all military medical officers. On arrival at the Base the fixation of fractured limbs was often not all that could be desired. This remark is sometimes applicable to similar cases treated in civil hospitals. The

marvel is that so very much good work was accomplished under most trying conditions.

At Magil Jetty, a few miles above Basra, we went on board the steamer, *Kalika* by name, bound for Kurna. She was of the usual type, double-decked, with awning overhead, laden with munitions, waggons, and food supplies. We passed a long green island on the port side, and just beyond it opens the mouth of the Euphrates. We noticed that its waters were much clearer than the Tigris. A fairly straight course brought us to Kurna, the traditional site of Eden, though it could hardly have been so near the sea, which in that era must have flooded the neighbourhood.

AMARA.—At Kurna we left our steam-launch and took the night train to Amara, a distance of seventy-five miles along the right bank of the river, passing Ezra's tomb in the darkness. We enjoyed sleeping in open trucks, except for the attentions of the mosquitoes. Amara is a goodly town on the left bank, with lofty brick houses and a fine broad promenade between them and the Tigris. At the Depot Rest Camp we stayed in mat-sheds awaiting the arrival of a boat to take us on to Kut. At the time there was no through line to Baghdad. Here, at a distance of 150 miles from Basra, may be found plenty of wares and fruits and vegetables. In the bazaar, which is covered with arched brick-work, you can buy all you want, and there the air is cooler than in the streets. Some of our party went fishing, for there is an abundance of this food, which, though very

bony, makes a pleasant change after a long spell of bully-beef. Réveillé sounded at 4.30 a.m. Soldiers ceased work at 9 a.m., resuming at 5 p.m., thus avoiding exposure in the great heat. The river is crossed in two places by a bridge of boats, which opens out at times to admit the various craft trafficking up and down stream.

There were well-equipped hospitals accommodating a total of about 8,000 beds. We slept by the river side, not forgetting to use the protective netting. It was an interesting sight to watch the dark-eyed women and children at early morn and eventide coming down to fill their water-jars, and the men to replenish their goat-skin bottles, with which they water their gardens. They attach them pannier fashion to their donkeys for conveyance inland. Unlike the Chinese, who are careful to drink only boiled water, and that generally in the form of tea, both the Arabs and Indians seem to drink any water available. The men wear the usual head-dress, which consists of a large cotton handkerchief folded diagonally, with a good flap hanging down to protect the back of the head, and kept in position by a brown coil of camel's hair or wool. Their long loose garment, like a night-gown, may be of various colours, and sandals or shoes complete their costume. The Arab women are veiled up to their eyes.

The inhabitants—Christians, Sabeans, Kurds, Jews and Arabs—were ostensibly friendly, and seemed well pleased at the advent of their new rulers. Trade was good, for money flows freely wherever the British soldier is in occupation. There was a general air of confidence

and prosperity about the place. As usual, the Y.M.C.A. provided a canteen, concerts, games, books, and Sunday services for the troops. Amongst the arrivals at the depot were men who, after a series of hard fights, had returned from spending their well-earned leave amongst the snows of Kashmir or at hill stations in India and Ceylon. On one occasion I accompanied the native fishermen in their boat, as they let their net flow downstream with the current. They enclosed a good number of fish, some of which were up to three pounds in weight, and there were also tortoises caught in the net. They seem to have no use for these.

Lieutenant C. of the Warwicks had died as a result of heat-stroke, and I thus visited the cemetery. I was the only one of his friends at the funeral. We had travelled out from England together. He became ill on a launch, and was taken into hospital at Amara. Whilst camping at Durban he had opportunity of displaying his skill at cricket. I well remember his joy when a wire arrived from home announcing the birth of his first-born.

War is a great leveller; side by side are buried privates and officers, shrouded only in army blankets, for wood is scarce, and the cross erected consists merely of two pieces of box wood bearing a simple inscription. No volley was fired, but the last post sounded forth. The Colonel in charge of No. 2 Hospital had died from the effects of heat a week earlier. I saw the grave of Sir Victor Horsley. He was given the luxury of a coffin, but here again a simple wooden cross formed the headstone. He preached vigorously against the prevalent

abuse of alcohol. Certain it is that, on mere grounds of necessity, alcoholic drinks are not essential for the maintenance of good health in a tropical climate.

Drinking is essential if the skin is to be kept moist, but this may be most satisfactorily effected by copious draughts of tea or soda-water, both of which are generally obtainable. The silversmiths at Amara were asking fancy prices for their peculiar wares. The few good workmen were executing orders for serviette-rings, cigarette-cases, coffee-pots, and rings. These are made of silver overlaid with antimony, and have etched into them miniatures of Ezra's tomb, palm-trees, river scenes, jackals, and birds. They have little else to illustrate in the land. The arch of Ctesiphon appears on the left bank of the river. It is the ruin of a Persian palace, dating probably from the first century B.C. The arch, about 90 feet in height, forms a noticeable landmark. We anchored for one night at Sheikh Sa'ad and visited the battlefield of Sinniyat. It was distressing to see how the British graves had been grossly disturbed by the Arabs. "Victory at Ctesiphon was the prelude to disaster at Kut."

BAGHDAD.—Baghdad, a word to conjure with! At the familiar name one's thoughts fly back to childhood, and one recalls the blood-curdling adventures, the hair-breadth escapes, the plots and counterplots, that so fascinated and thrilled us on winter nights long ago when we turned over the pages of "The Arabian Nights Entertainments." Here lived Ali Baba and his forty thieves,

and here above all lived and reigned Harun-El-Rashid, the great and mighty Caliph, whose word was law and whose nod carried the power of life and death. Here he held his court, renowned in story for its wealth and magnificence. These glories have long passed away—even the modern city, however, is delightfully archaic and picturesque.

Here Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Cretans, Arabians, Jews and Armenians, rub shoulders in a motley throng. Baghdad is said to have been built in A.D. 800 by the still immortal Harun-El-Rashid, Caliph of Baghdad. Like a Chinese city, it possessed a moat and a wall, the latter some four miles in circumference. There were four main gates, and streets with guard-houses. In process of time, like all old cities, it developed suburbs, which extended for sixteen miles round the city, with parks, plantations and gardens. The land, watered by an intricate system of canals, locks and sluices, brought forth her increase abundantly and merited the title of “The Granary of Asia.”

Then in A.D. 1257 came the real Yellow Peril. Hulangu with his Mongol hordes advanced westward. He burnt Baghdad, massacred the inhabitants, ruined the irrigation plant, and executed the Caliph. Still later trouble was in store, for in A.D. 1400 Timur, another Mongol, laid waste Asia from the banks of the Volga to Delhi, and from Samarkand to the Euphrates, leaving, like the modern Hun, death, ruin and desolation in his track. By A.D. 1530 Suliman conquered Baghdad, which became the eastern limit of the Ottoman Empire. The

Turk never repairs. He severely left the irrigation question alone. This grand country, won for us by the folly of Germany, though scarcely a white man's land, will recover its former prestige under British rule and direction. The Turks cut a military road right through the heart of the city down to the river, to facilitate the passage of their guns and munitions. In doing this, sections of the houses were left on each side of the road, showing doors, rooms, papered walls, and sometimes even remnants of furniture. In other places the brick vaults of the basement rooms are open to the public view.

There are many Chaldeans in the city. Their church is said to be the oldest communion in Christendom, founded by the Magi on their return from Bethlehem. When asked to attend the sick daughter of a well-to-do Chaldean merchant, I had an opportunity of inspecting the interior of a native house from basement to roof, which I will try to describe. The house was built by the merchant's father some fifty years ago. Like most houses in the East, the portals were very unpretentious, and gave little indication of the comfort existing inside. The building was of brick, round a courtyard, with rooms opening from it through yellow brick arches on all four sides. The lower living-rooms, inhabited only in summer time, were sunk about four feet below the level of the courtyard and vaulted in brick, which was cut into curious designs. Persian carpets were strewn on the tiled floor. During the heat of the day the family occupied the cushioned divans. Delicious Mocha coffee, Turkish

cigarettes, Russian tea, and English biscuits were offered to the doctor by these very hospitable people.

The upper story was light and airy, and mainly built of wood with a filling of brick or plaster. The furnishing was a combination of Eastern and Western styles. The roof is their sleeping quarters all through the hot season. It is curious to look across the house-tops, for there you see beds of all kinds, from mere wooden trestles to wire spring beds, with mosquito curtains and toilet furniture. Such roofs are firmly built. Stout palm stems or rough poles are laid horizontally, and superimposed are layers of palm leaves and rush matting. Upon this earth is spread to a thickness of half a foot, and when this is rolled and pressed down, a thick coating of cement makes the whole waterproof. Finally a parapet extends around the roof for safety, and this is pierced by holes at the corners to let rain-water run off. Here the Mohammedan spreads his prayer mat, turns his face to Mecca and prays to Allah, saying, "Allah Akbar" (God is great), while with his hands on his knees he bows his head; "Subhan Allah" (I praise God), and he falls on his knees; "Allah Akbar" (God is great), and he bows his head to touch the earth.

Away from the river this form of roof serves other uses, as farmers are wont to dry their produce there, and in the rainy season collect the valuable rain-water. I have been in one large hospital outside the walls of Jerusalem, where the entire water-supply for the year consists of rain-water, which is conducted by earthen pipes leading from the flat roof into subterranean tanks. It will be

seen that such houses differ totally from those of the Chinese, whose dwellings are single-storied, and of a style of architecture which seems to have been derived from their original nomadic origin. The slope of the Chinese roof, its upturned corners, the absence of an upper story, all remind one of a tent; also the main supports of the gabled roof are the wooden pillars. Walls are merely used to fill up the intervening spaces and afford protection from the weather. As in the Bedawin tents, there is little privacy in a Chinese house, for the thin partitions admit of everything being heard.

The approach to this famous city is very pretty. The banks of the river are plumed with palm-trees, orange groves, and tropical or luxuriant vegetation. At lowest water along the banks by the city may be seen sun-dried bricks stamped and dated like those found in ancient Babylon. To those who expect to find lofty minarets, turquoise domes, spires and gorgeous mosques, Baghdad is disappointing, as there are but few of such. Until very recently all rubbish found its way to the river. Men might be seen driving mules and donkeys laden with baskets of town refuse to empty in the river. The two systems of sanitation in vogue were known as the cheap and dear methods. The former consisted of a cess-pit in the back garden, which was emptied annually; whilst the dear method meant a daily emptying of the night-soil into the Tigris, so that the town midden and the town watering-place were one and the same spot! Women and children wander about the streets collecting camel dung, which they make into pancake masses, dry

in the sun, and then use for fuel, as wood is very scarce. The newcomer to the East is apt to despise the narrow streets and close proximity of the houses on each side. These are so placed that they admit the minimum of sun, so are kept cool, whilst people can go about the streets all day long, and their close proximity keeps out the cold blasts in winter. Broad streets would be intolerable, unless they were lined by leafy trees, when the outdoor temperature is 140° . Then, again, our tight-fitting European clothing has less in its favour than the loose-flowing Eastern garb. The city is situated half-way between the Persian Gulf and Mosul, which manufactures muslin. The river divides the city into two parts; that on the right bank is the older town. There the buildings are less imposing. It contains the railway terminus, and there are orange and date groves. The town on the left bank contains the Residency, Government offices, and hospitals.

After travelling for four months, I arrived in Baghdad and was attached to the 31st Stationary Hospital. This spacious building four months previously was the Turkish infantry barracks, and was vacated just before the Black Watch and Seaforths entered the city on March 11, 1917. It accommodated 1,000 patients. A good deal of repairing and cleansing had to be carried out before the premises could be used as a British hospital. One great boon was that the whole staff could sleep on the flat roof and enjoy the cool nights, without being troubled by insect pests. As soon as the sun arose, with its scorching rays, that was *réveillé* to all.

The buildings formed three sides of a rectangle; the River Tigris formed the remaining side. The open space in the centre contained a lofty clock-tower of Turkish design (the bell, however, was made in London and dated last century). There was also a goodly number of water-tanks for drinking and cooking purposes. Every morning Indian coolies pumped up the water direct from the Tigris into these tanks. This was sedimented with alum, which precipitated all suspended matter. The clear fluid was then chlorinated with bleaching powder and rendered bacteriologically pure. Coolies then distributed it throughout the hospital, where it was stored in native unglazed water-jars, where a constant oozing of water through the porous sides and its rapid evaporation renders the water within many degrees cooler than the surrounding atmosphere.

There were many cases of heat-stroke, malaria, dysentery, and typhoid. Of the latter disease paratyphoid was the commonest type, whilst dysentery was chiefly of the bacillary variety. I think that heat-stroke caused us more anxiety these summer months than any other troubles. I saw nothing so severe in Egypt or in China. It made a great impression on all who witnessed men struggling under the attack. I will give some details on this subject for the benefit of those lacking the experience.

The summer sun is a great fire, and Mesopotamia is the fireplace. In July and August of 1917 there were two record heat waves, but by that time ice and soda-water were easily obtainable for the use of the troops,

and there were special stations or shelters for refuge in various parts of cities, where soldiers could obtain help when feeling overcome by the heat, and at the cool of the day they would be transferred to hospital. The native chatti, or water-bottle, permits of free evaporation. The water oozes through the pores, with the beneficial result that it becomes deliciously cool within the bottle, perhaps ten degrees lower than that of the surrounding atmosphere. The human body likewise benefits from perspiration, but, once we cease to perspire, the skin becomes dry, and the heat-regulating mechanism gets out of gear. Some forty serious cases were brought to the hospital in one month, and many of the worst of these recovered. One of the unsuccessful cases showed very many symptoms common to most others. Picture a tall, hefty, thick-necked, middle-aged man, Private M., of the Connaught Rangers, who was admitted late in the afternoon. He was doing well when suddenly his temperature shot up to 109°. He became maniacal, jumped out of bed and proceeded to rush across the compound to the Tigris. He was stopped on the way, and was with some difficulty brought back to bed. We treated him with ice-pack; he was rubbed with ice and induced to drink as much fluid as possible. His face was extremely congested. Venesection and subsequent saline injections gave relief, but twelve hours later our efforts met with disappointment. Some of the patients were military police, who had been standing on duty in covered bazaars when they suddenly collapsed. For some reason they had ceased to perspire, and the body

temperature approximated to that of the air around them. Whether the cause is primarily due to this or to an intoxication of the heat centre is uncertain.

Most men serving in Mesopotamia have had one or two doses of sandfly fever, and not a few have contracted malaria locally or in India. It is suggested that such conditions predispose to heat-stroke in a country with such a tropical sun. The only like case I had seen in China was that of a Russian Vice-Consul who went out for a pony ride; ill-protected from the afternoon sun. When I called to see him early next morning his temperature rose to 110° . Certainly it is essential to health and comfort that copious draughts of potable water be taken in the day. This hospital was well supplied with electric light and fans, and ice could be had in plenty. It was an order that soldiers ceased work after nine o'clock in the morning. Of course, it was necessary for the M.O. and nursing staff to carry on all day long. Native workmen readily broke off work at noon, and, after partaking of a light meal, coiled themselves up in shady spots and enjoyed a few hours' siesta. Even the sparrows, with beaks wide open and panting, came for rest beneath the patients' beds. The M.O., clad in a short pair of drill breeches, a shirt, spine pad and helmet, went his daily rounds.

I met an officer in the Black Watch who had come from Shanghai, and he was awfully pleased to have someone with whom he could discuss Chinese affairs and talk about the many China hands who are serving in the Great War. The leading figure in Baghdad was General

Maude, who might often be seen at an early hour setting out on a water-plane, to visit the advance stations up the Tigris and Diala rivers, or riding through the town, attended by a small escort of Indian cavalry. As he passed, the people sitting in cafés and other resorts rose respectfully to greet him, and their salutes were acknowledged with cordiality. He seemed to be most popular, and the people ostensibly very friendly to him. It was his custom to visit our hospital once a fortnight, generally on a Sunday. These were no perfunctory calls, for he took a keen interest in the individual sick, asking them how they were getting on, their length of service, etc. The men felt highly honoured. He was a man, and the gentlest conqueror who had ever entered the gates of Baghdad. There was widespread regret when he was taken, and the following remarks of a Cabinet Minister told the sad tale to the public: "He died a victim of the inbred courtesy of his fine character. He visited a plague-stricken area at the invitation of its inhabitants. They gave him a great welcome for the many kindnesses he had displayed. They offered him a small act of hospitality, and though he knew the peril so well that he had forbidden any soldier in his escort to eat or drink while on that visit, he ran the risk himself rather than hurt the susceptibilities of the people. There was cholera in the cup, and he died in a few days."

Before the war Drs. Stanley and Larvi of the Church Mission had carried on a very beneficial work, which ceased on the outbreak of hostilities. Stone seems to

be a very prevalent trouble, and some 3,000 cases were recorded during the Mission's career in the past thirty years. The largest stone removed by a surgeon is said to have been done in Baghdad. The farmers like the crushing operation—"done while you wait." A visit we paid to the older town on the opposite bank of the river brought into view the well-built permanent railway laid down by the Germans. German engines, machinery, and workshops were seen. The line extends across the desert to Samara. On this bank there is a hospital for officers as well as a picturesquely situated convalescent camp. We passed through date plantations, where Arabs were hauling themselves up the tall straight palm stems, to pick the ripe fruit. In the land of Ivak the palm-tree takes the place of the bamboo found so indispensable in China. The Celestial uses bamboo poles or a disused coffin lid to bridge a small stream. The Arab employs a palm stem for the same purpose. The latter eats the fruit, the former consumes bamboo shoots. Every part of both kinds of tree is taken into use; nothing goes to waste. The lighter parts of the old frond are employed for matting on floors or walls by the poor. The stem of the leaf makes light baskets and bedsteads, etc. The thick base of the midrib may often be seen as floats to support fishing-nets and lines. The trunks support the flat roofs of dwelling-houses. It takes a powerful sun to ripen a date. Those who enjoy this fruit taken from small fancy boxes at an English dinner-table little know what a furnace of heat it takes to bring this fruit to perfection.

In the absence of bees and butterflies, the palms are barren, unless resort is had to artificial propagation. An Arab by means of a stiff rope encircling the stem hauls himself up the stately palm trunk. He carries the male pollen in a little bag at the end of a stick which is about a foot long. The bag is of open mesh, so that a gentle shake scatters the pollen in a little shower of yellow dust, and propagation is accomplished. By the same method he climbs the fruit-laden tree, to cull the large golden fruit, after the hot wind of August, called the "Date Ripener," has done its work. A good tree will bring him nearly a pound sterling of fruit. The harvest from millions of trees must be very considerable. As the rivers of Southern China bear on their waters flotillas of sampans, junks and steamers laden with tea, so we have on the Tigris and Shatt-el-Arab a scene of busy traffic with bellums, maheilahs, dhows and steamers, for the transit of this luscious fruit to India and more distant lands.

HOMEWARD BOUND.—The journey of 500 miles down river was made on board launch P. 55. Captain Robertson Wylie and myself were in charge of the sick officers and men bound for the Base Hospital at Basra. Besides our men, there were Indians and a few Chinese members of a Labour Corps. It was strange to see these different nationals lying side by side in harmonious relationship. The Chinese prove themselves very quiet and easily pleased patients. They only evince a special desire for drinking tea. Our boat P. 55 may be taken as

a type of the hospital boat in common use up the river. There were scores of these launches plying on the Tigris and Euphrates, and all were brought out from England. It is a flat-bottomed double-decked paddle-steamer, adapted for work in shallows. The heating of the boilers is done by oil, which is pumped on board without any of the dusty, noisy accompaniments of coaling; electric light and fans and a good ice supply make the hospital boat a veritable haven of rest for the men. There were two nurses, assisted by trained orderlies. Arrangements are made whereby European, Mohammédan, Sikh, and Hindoo have their food prepared according to their accustomed methods.

To each side of the launch a flat-decked river barge was hitched, so as to increase the accommodation for patients. The deck space was kept clear for the patients, who were conveyed straight on board from the 23rd and 31st Stationary Hospitals and laid down side by side on their stretchers, until they are carried off at the end of the journey. In this way there is a minimum of disturbance, as the stretcher becomes the patient's bed until he arrives at Basra. The barges have double roofing; side curtains, which act as a protection from the sun during the day, are rolled up when not required. The patients bore the journey well. Some looked very jaded; apart from casualties resulting from actual fighting, many men are worn to weakness by long service in a trying climate, where the heat takes it out of you. They feel their vitality is being lowered. The food provided, though

plentiful, lacks the flavour, nourishing and appetising qualities which dwellers in the West are accustomed to. Eggs are puny, beef less rich, butter and fruit are wanting in flavour. So there comes about a gradual loss in body weight. Combining these conditions with the presence of a high temperature, the nervous system is bound to suffer more or less, and mental energy wanes. In short, they lose tone and nerve potential. Plenty of sleep out in the open and sufficient exercise go a long way to keep the soldier fit. One Captain in the R.A.M.C., whose thigh was fractured, found himself beside a Chinese unable to speak English. The latter tried to tell of his injury by making signs thus, "Whizz, whizz, makee thump," and he placed a finger over his spine where a piece of shrapnel had struck. Then he drew from the inner folds of his clothing a cigarette, which he offered to the Captain, who, not willing to offend, accepted and smoked it, though with qualms! It must delight the Chinese, whose customary garments are blue, to see our cheery men clad in those loose blue clothes, red ties, and the trousers turned up, showing often a huge margin of white lining, wearing, as has been said, "The blue badge of courage." Elsewhere I heard a characteristic story of one of the Labour Corps, which is as follows: "No can do," said Wong Fong. The officer sighed. The job was urgent. It turned out that Wong Fong was not well. He diagnosed his complaint as "Muchee jump belly." So he went to hospital. One day the enemy planes got through and were almost

overhead. The hospital staff worked feverishly at getting the wounded into the cellar out of harm's way. When a nurse offered assistance, Wong Fong shook his head. "Can do," he said briefly, and worked like a man. One day the wounded were carried downstairs, so that the ward was almost empty when the first bomb struck it. A doctor gave a choking cough and collapsed. Wong Fong looked dazedly at the destruction and carried on. The sick man in his arms stared at a spreading stain on the Chinaman's jacket. "Wong Fong," he said, "you're hit!" He carried himself downstairs without a word. "Sister," cried the sick man, "sister, I think he's hurt." The nurse hurried forward. "Let me see," she said, and looked grave. "Here, lie down"—for she saw that the injury was serious. "Can do," said Wong Fong fiercely, and started for the stairs. He made an effort, collapsed against the wall, and slid to the floor. He tried to rise, then laid his pale cheek against the flags. "No can do," he whispered, and closed his eyes.

There were scarcely any books on board to while away the weary unoccupied hours, so, like the natives of the land, they beguile the long hours by narrating personal adventures. Heroes were not wanting, and their stories were told to the interested listeners. To read a comrade's life is profitable recreation. Some are tomes, others mere booklets, yet each has a tale to disclose, which is well worth the hearing. Some readily give of their best in conversation, and are glad to receive in return. An

Arab stood at the bows of each barge poling the stream for depth. He kept singing out, "Four feet," "Six feet," and so forth, according to the amount of water. Missing his foothold, one of these men tumbled in and was soon carried away by the current. Everything had to stop until he was rescued, for all human life is valuable. The comical part of the incident was that the skipper ordered him a severe cuffing for his clumsiness.

On another occasion a Sikh, who had taken umbrage at the way in which his food was cooked, jumped overboard into the shark-infested sea. With much difficulty and at no little risk to the ship, he was rescued from a watery grave. Two lifebelts and a lot of time were lost before the ship proceeded on her course. He didn't seem at all conscious of the trouble he caused us. Some men are selfish!

It was necessary, for the sake of the patients, to proceed with considerable caution whilst we passed a bend in the river called the "Devil's Elbow." As it was, one of the barges came at a great rate bumping on to the shelving bank and causing the boat's deck to slant downwards, somewhat to the risk and discomfort of the stretcher cases. The Arab boy is an attractive creature. He is lithe of limb and runs faster than our boys can run. I have seen them swimming right across the swift-flowing Tigris. They show a keenness to learn English words, and will use them at every opportunity. Nor are our soldiers slow to acquire a working knowledge of

Arab words. There are four of these which almost every man learns—"Maleesh" (It doesn't matter), "Mafeesh" (There's nothing doing), "Bukra" (Tomorrow), "Baksheesh" (A tip). Like as in China, boys are held in higher esteem than girls, and that is so for different reasons. The male Chinese alone may perform the all-important ancestral worship. To the Arab a son may bring wealth and promotion. For one reason or another, in both races, the birth of a daughter carries with it disappointment. No crackers, festivities or joyful music greet the arrival of a girl. Along the river banks are seen the tents of wandering shepherds. They are easily distinguishable from the snowy white British pattern; for an Arab tent is a low covering of black goat's hair, with an open front, supported by two poles. Ropes tied to rough pegs driven into the ground keep the tent in position. Curtains may be suspended, dividing the interior into apartments.

The sunset is of brief duration. In the absence of hills and clouds there is little to catch and reflect the setting rays. We can picture the long and tedious marchings of old father Abraham across the desert from palm clumps to halting-places, with women and children, manservants and maidservants, he-asses and she-asses, oxen and flocks. The pace must be slow, for these must not be overdriven. When he "went out," he exhibited great faith. It is a land of but few flowers. Pink and white oleander, pomegranate, and sunflowers are most frequently met with. Here and there large mounds

were visible—the remnants of obsolete towns and sacked villages. Nature with her sand-storms had given them decent burial, and over all grew camel-thorn and wild grasses. Blue-tailed kingfishers flew in flocks along the banks, where their nest holes could be counted by the hundred. Jackals howled after sunset, by which time the shepherd boy had driven his flocks of sheep and goats into tent for the night. Every soldier keeps a good look-out for the rich turquoise dome of Ezra's tomb. It appeals to him as a tangible relic of the past. Pilgrims relate that the prophet Ezra, when nearing his death, extracted a promise from his people that his lifeless body should be placed on a camel and the beast be permitted to wander away at its own sweet will. At the place where it lay down to rest there burial should be made. The wily camel wandered afar, until it arrived at the river, and, having drank of its waters, lay down, and there Ezra was interred.

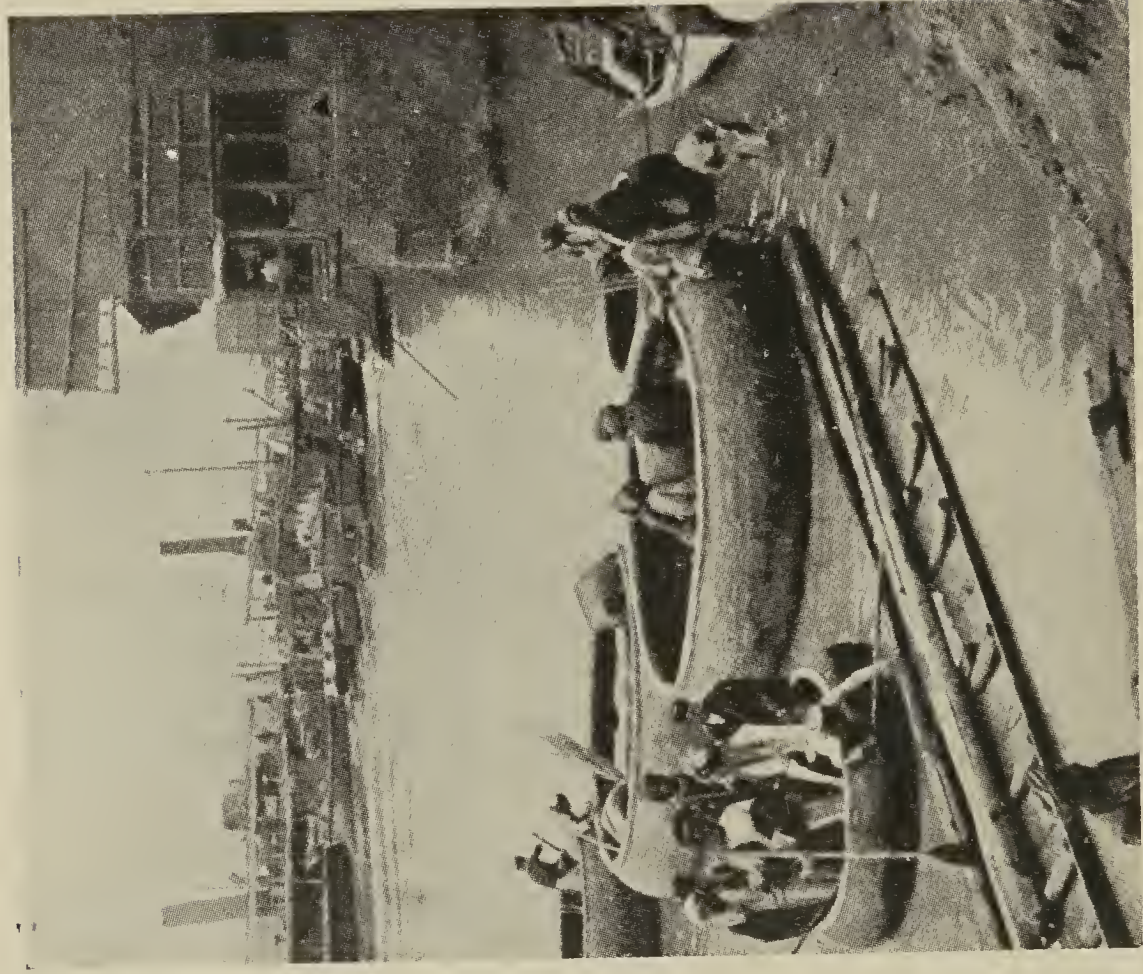
Having put the patients ashore, I accompanied Captain Robertson Wylie on a tour through the native town at Basra. Taking a bellum for the purpose, we went by creek. There were the usual bazaars, thronged streets, and people with endless leisure, sipping coffee or smoking the hubble-bubble. At length the time arrived to shake off the dust of Mesopotamia and to board the ill-fated B.I. Trooper *Edavana* for passage to Bombay. Farewell, O land of the two rivers! The future for thee is full of good hope. For wellnigh 400 years you have suffered from the misrule and maladmin-



AN ITINERANT COFFEE SELLER

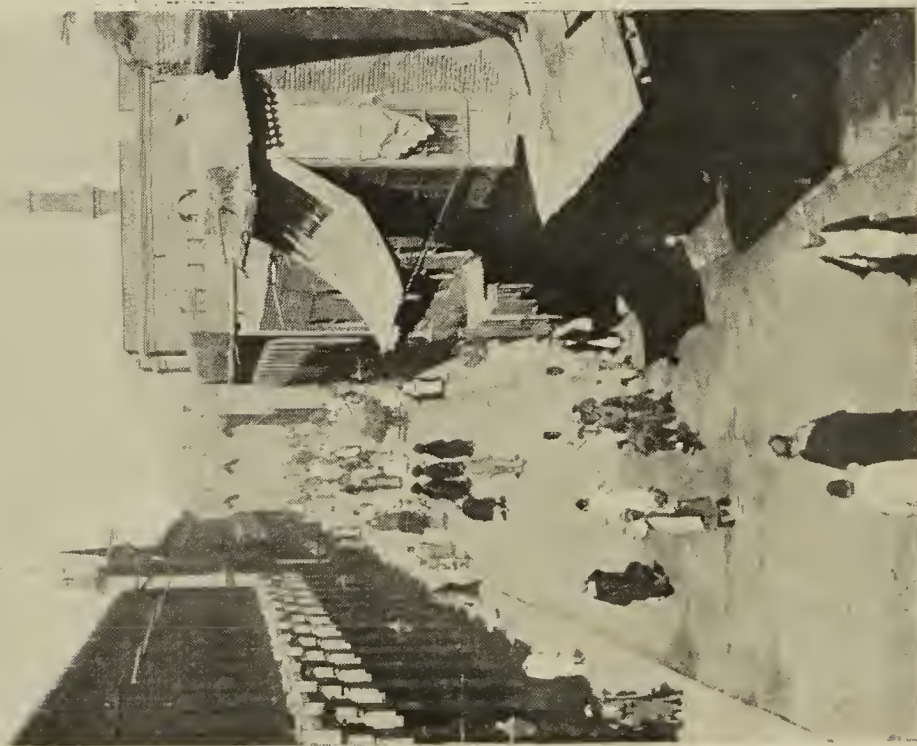


THE SILK MERCHANT IN HIS FACTORY



[Photograph: Underwood

A CONTRAST: MODERN SHIPPING AND GOOFAS, BAGHDAD



A STREET IN BAGHDAD

istration of the Turk. Apathy and stagnation have now departed under beneficent and energetic British rule. The marauding Arab will cease to harry peaceful settlers. Well for thee if Chinese and Indian Labour Corps workers remain in the country, so that, instead of Mongol desolation, the country may approach its former position as the granary of Asia. The British at their best are the antiseptic of the world, the salt of the earth; may their best be liberally bestowed on the nations of the East, who, having awakened from the sleep of ages, are now mightily refreshed. Their hands are stretched out, whilst with loud voices they cry, "I want, I want."

The *Edavana* was a small troopship, very comfortably fitted out. Being the only medical officer on board, I had to care for the ship's crew as well as the troops. One afternoon, when 200 miles from Bombay, a fire broke out in the baggage-room, the work of an evil one, no doubt in league with the enemy. Dense black smoke issued from the burning room, driving away the members of the ship's fire brigade. It was impossible to get the fire under on this glorious sunny afternoon; the flames spread aft with intense rapidity. The Lascars rushed the boats and doggedly sat there, refusing to give help. These men, in whom the instinct of self-preservation is highly developed, remained in the boats, while we officers lowered them gently into the water. The words "Lascar" and "rascal" have the same letters. Speedy action was imperative. With our

own hands we cast overboard the massive rafts. No luggage could be taken; in fact, we could see the flames lapping up our valises and baggage with an insatiable appetite; and the officer, who had on board a hundred pounds' worth of Persian carpets, groaned in spirit. The third engineer, the Marconi man, the Captain and myself were the last to leave the ship, and occupied one raft. We had to ply our paddles vigorously to keep the raft from being impaled on the propellers. In the darkness of the night a light was seen on the horizon. By means of some surgical gauze, absorbent wool and a bandage applied to the end of a paddle-stick, a useful flare was made, which guided the hospital ship *Madras* to our whereabouts. For eleven hours on a dark night we had drifted from the burning ship, and boats and rafts were scattered miles apart. On board the *Madras* we received a warm reception and the best of attention, and eventually all got safe to land. From Bombay I had to conduct a party of Chinese by train to Calcutta, whence they would be returned to their own country. It was a pleasure to talk to these cheery fellows, who bartered and bargained at the railway stations, and seemed more like a party of schoolboys on a holiday than the members of a Labour Corps released from hard toil in Mesopotamia. When I noticed the aroma of opium in one coach, they laughed at having been found out. I had longed with intense longing to see the Black Hole of Calcutta. Alas! there was no hole to see, but a glaring white monument marked the site where our

countrymen and countrywomen suffered in durance vile. As I passed through the vast dominions of Africa, Mesopotamia, and India, the words of the poet oft came into my mind, "The moon of Mohammed arose, and it shall set, while, blazoned as on Heaven's immortal noon, the Cross leads generations on."

